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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Ballinger, et al.
Application No. 10/645,279
Filed: 20 August, 2003
Attorney Docket No. 13768.455

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DECISION

This is a decision on the petition filed on 15 June, 2009, for revival of an application abandoned due to unintentional delay under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

The petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **DISMISSED**.

As to the Allegations
of Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee. (However, it does not appear that a terminal disclaimer and fee are due here.)

Petitioners' attentions always are directed to the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(II).

BACKGROUND

The record reflects as follows:

Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the final Office action mailed on 12 September, 2008, with reply due under absent an extension of time on or before 12 December, 2008

On 11 December, 2008, Petitioner filed an amendment after final, which the Examiner refused to enter and Petitioner—as one registered to practice before the Office—knew was not as of right

and not a proper reply¹ if it did not *prima facie* place the application in condition for allowance, and on 7 January, 2009, the Examiner mailed an Advisory Action.

On 11 March, 2009, Petitioner filed, *inter alia*, a request and fee for extension of time, a reply in the form of a request for continued examination (RCE) and fee and a submission under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.114 in the form of an amendment.

On 16 March, 2009, the Office mailed a Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment—which specified that no new time period for reply was provided if the amendment was after-final or after allowance or drawings only, but did grant a one month period for reply and permit extensions of time pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) if the non-compliant amendment was, *inter alia*, “a submission for request for continued examination.”

It appears that the Office did not mail a Notice of Abandonment before the instant petition was filed.

On 15 June, 2009, Petitioner filed, *inter alia*, a petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b), with fee, with a statement of unintentional delay and a reply in the form of an amendment, with a request and fee for extension of time (one- (1-) month) and authorization to charge Deposit Account 23-3178 for fees as required. It appears that a three- (3-) month extension of time was required to make timely the reply to the 16 March, 2009, Notice—which fee is charged in the place of the fee paid. Thus, the application was not abandoned—the petition is moot and the fee is refunded. Should Petitioner later find that the fee was not refunded, Petitioner should request a refund from the Office of Finance and provide a copy of this petition therewith.

Again, Petitioners’ attentions always are directed to the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c) (II).

The availability of applications and application papers online to applicants/practitioners who diligently associate their Customer Number with the respective application(s) now provides an applicant/practitioner on-demand information as to events/transactions in an application.

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that those registered to practice and all others who make representations before the Office **must** inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.²

¹ A proper reply is an amendment *prima facie* placing the application in condition for allowance, a Notice of Appeal, or an RCE (with fee and submission under 37 C.F.R. §1.114). (See: MPEP §711.03(c).)

² See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on petitioner’s duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).³

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a Petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority.

Unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁴

As to Allegations of Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee.

It appears that the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is moot.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **dismissed as moot**.

The instant application is released to the Technology Center/AU 2416 for further processing in due course.

Petitioner may find it beneficial to view Private PAIR within a fortnight of the instant decision to ensure that the revival has been acknowledged by the TC/AU in response to this decision. It is noted that all inquiries with regard to that change in status need be directed to the TC/AU where that change of status must be effected—that does not occur in the Office of Petitions.


³ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

⁴ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

Telephone inquiries regarding this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214—it is noted, however, that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2⁵) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).



/John J. Gillon, Jr./
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Office of Petitions

⁵ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:

§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.